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AUTHOR Brock, O. Lee
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ABSTRACT

In 1967, a group of minority community members and faculty of the various community colleges in the Puget Sound Region banded together in an attempt to make their institutions more responsive to their communities and students. Out of their first meetings emerged a cooperative effort by the involved institutions to improve and expand services and programs to meet the educational needs of Asian American, black, Chicano, and Native American students and their communities. The membership of the Puget Sound Regional Minority Affairs Consortium (PSRMAC) is now composed of 12 college presidents, the campus Minority Affairs Directors, and four educational program specialists for minority education. PSRMAC facilitates six college functions: (1) meaningful career placement for minority students; (2) the recruitment of minority faculty, administrators, staff, and students; (3) the development of ethnic studies courses; (4) the development of programs to maximize the academic success of minority students; (5) the development of relevant supportive services for minority students; (6) establishment of PSRMAC sponsored programs, including tutorial service, prevocational training, and counseling. Special functions of, and programs sponsored by PSRMAC are described, and directions for the future are recommended. (Author/NHM)

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STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

PUGET SOUND REGIONAL MINORITY AFFAIRS CONSORTIUM -- PSRMAC

Presented to: The Council on Black American Affairs--
Western Regional meeting--Airport Sheraton Hotel
February 26-29, 1976

and

The 56th Annual Convention of the American Association
of Community and Junior Colleges
March 17-19, 1976
Washington Hilton Hotel
Washington, D. C.

By: O. Lee Brock
Director, Minority Affairs
Assistant Director, Continuing Education
North Seattle Community College
Chairperson Elect --PSRMAC

JC 760 355

INTRODUCTION

"One of the primary problems facing American education today is the problem of relating the institution to the community."

From an introductory document to the Washington State Legislature.

During the 1960s America was experiencing turbulence and sweeping social changes challenging the educational institutions to become more relevant and more participatory in the processes that were taking place.

In 1967, against this backdrop of a rapidly changing American scene, a group of minority community members and faculty of the various community colleges in the Puget Sound Region began to meet and try to make their institutions more responsive to their communities and students.

Out of these first meetings emerged a cooperative effort by the involved institutions to improve and expand their services and programs to better meet the educational needs of Asian American, Black, Chicano and Native American Students and their communities.

Since its inception "The Consortium" has come to include in its membership proper the presidents of each member college and the respective Minority Affairs directors and meets bi-monthly to discuss, review and recommend continued improvement in the area of minority affairs.

The Puget Sound Regional Minority Affairs Consortium (PSRMAC) is a unique body in terms of its goals, structure and ethnic composition (see diagram). It exemplifies best, the notion of third world people working toward a common end for the benefit of their respective communities. The following goals are prescribed as a resource for member community colleges to utilize in the development of their educational programs:

GOALS

1. To facilitate meaningful career placement for minority students in cooperation with the services at each individual campus.

2. To facilitate the recruitment of faculty, administration, staff and students in conjunction with the affirmative action officers at each campus or district in the implementation of affirmative action programs.

3. To facilitate the development of ethnic studies courses at each campus.

4. To facilitate the development of programs that will maximize academic success of minority students.

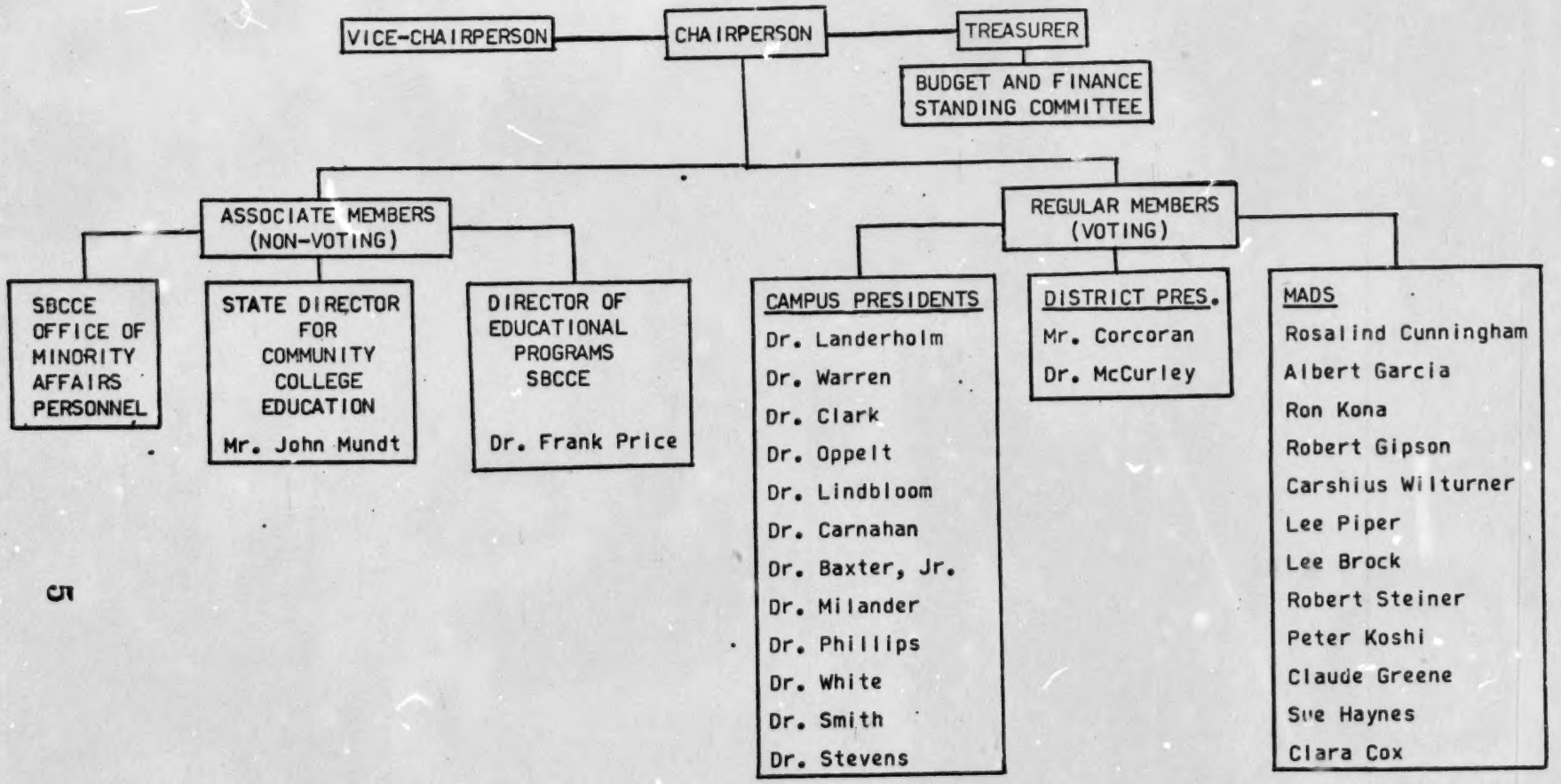
5. To facilitate the development of relevant supportive services for minority students.

6. To facilitate institutionalization of programs sponsored by PSRMAC.

Specific activities are essential for the organization to maintain a level of continuity; attendance has been one of our strengths, pertinent issues that stimulate healthy dialogue between our participants is yet another positive force. However, the most significant factor attributing to the six (6) years of successful operation of this body has been the administrative structure, by which it functions (see diagram).

The membership is composed of twelve (12) college presidents, the campus Minority Affairs Directors (MAD's) along with four educational program specialists for minority education, housed at the State Board for Community College Education (SBCCE). The SBCCE staff are associate members, who do not vote but whose recommendations are accepted with high esteem. The leadership role in the consortium has been filled by a MAD since the creation of the organization. It is a significant departure from the traditional subordinate roles that people of color have had to take, in many organized groups where you have members who hold high ranking positions such as the Chief Executive of an institution.

PUGET SOUND REGIONAL MINORITY AFFAIRS CONSORTIUM



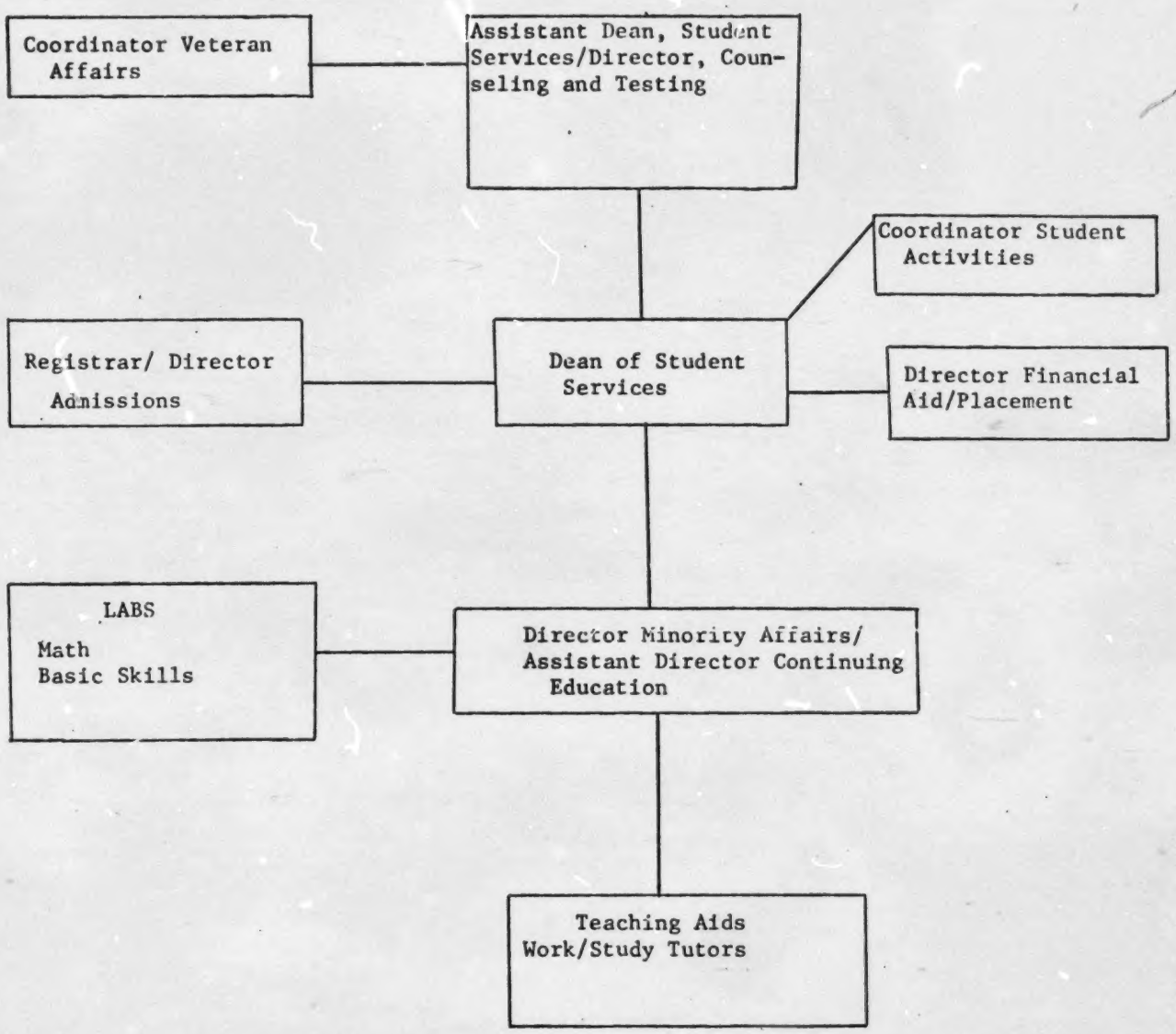
By placing the Chairmanship in the hands of a MAD rather than a President, the body demonstrates its committment to accept the particular expertise of third world educators in the development of educational programs and policy that affect our daily lives.

The standing budget committee chaired by a MAD, makes recommendations to the group on expenditure of the state allocation ($900,000 1975-77 biennium). It also scrutinizes the proposals from member colleges to assure compatibility with the defined goals. They are responsible for developing guidelines for accountability and follow-up on the spending of alloted dollars.

In the campus administrative hierarchy the offices of the MAD's are under the colleges student services department (see diagram pg. 3) along with the directors of counseling/testing, financial aids and placement, admissions and the registrars. This initial recognition of the minority affairs thrust, has brought about a healthy exchange between many members of the colleges professional staffs. Our interactions are primarily focused on the relatedness of the high attrition rates of minority students and the predominately white staffed institutions. Because the sensitivity of traditional instructional modes are quite often questioned by ethnic students who bring to the campuses a firm community base and a strong ethnic identity, we must continue to work toward increasing minority faculty ratios to avoid needless identity crisis. The need to cognitively communicate with the increased enrollment of students with various ethnic backgrounds is clearly a problem that institutions of higher learning must reckon with in the future development of educational programs.

The PSRMAC is providing some directions to pursue (aforementioned goals) in meeting the needs of minority students, as they enter the open-doors of the community colleges, in the State of Washington.

With President Ford's philosophy of "Tightening the Belt" in order to solve our nation's economic problems, our liberal educational system may slowly regress back to the days when only 'those who had it,kept it,' and them who ain't, can't. The curbing of spending and elimination of programs in education is clearly a reality and people of color, in higher education and any other public service position, must frequently reaccess his/her position and reaffirm the original committment that was made to their constituents. Recognition by colleges must grow past their initial stage of acceptance, if the ethnic segment of American society are to continue to buy the story that he can advance in this open competitive society more successfully with a college education. More credence will have to be given to the need for skilled professionals who possess the unique talents of working with people of all cultural and ethnic backgrounds.


Coordinator Veteran Affairs
Assistant Dean, Student Services/Director, Counseling and Testing
Coordinator Student Activities
Registrar/ Director Admissions
Dean of Student Services
Director Financial Aid/Placement
LABS
Math
Basic Skills
Director Minority Affairs/ Assistant Director Continuing Education
Teaching Aids
Work/Study Tutors

THE PROGRAMS

The most common program that member colleges offer is a tutorial service, at no cost to the students. This is usually staffed by qualified work/study students who possess the skill of sharing his knowledge with a fellow student. Further, it has developed into a learning situation for both parties, we discovered from our tutors that they benefit from reviewing the material with their tutees and their grades improved along with the students they assisted.

Another program that is gaining momentum is our pre-vocational training which is co-operated by the area Opportunities Industrial Centers (OIC's) and the community college. The emphasis in this effort is placed on a well defined curriculum, designed to prepare a student for his/her vocational program, when it is evident that the student is lacking the basic skills that are needed to compete successfully. Their orientation and skills building is encompassed in the overall planning.

The counseling philosophies of the offices of minority affairs, is unique in that they are flexible in their outreach to students. There is a mobile counseling unit at Tacoma Community College to provide services to the various ethnic communities, when the need arises. Shoreline Community College, a suburban school,provides free transportation for inner city students. Seattle Community College because of its ethnic composition (25% to 30% minority enrollment), must utilize the approach of peer identity to continually stimulate students who are indecisive about their choice of program. The latter is very useful in attacking our high attrition rates, in certain programs.

Many campuses offer courses in the area of ethnic studies but because the directors have little or no jurisdiction over instructional programs, it had not been one of our strong points. We are continuing to advocate ethnic course offering to maintain a level of awareness of third world contributions to the growth and development of this country.

This is a few of the many unique programs that we have developed over a period of six (6) years. We are optimistic in that many of our ideas and efforts have already been interfaced with permanent functions of the colleges.

THE FUTURE

In the coming years the efforts of PSRMAC can serve as a catalyst for the development of programs at all community colleges. The need for developmental centers has been clearly demonstrated as we have witnessed yearly increases of students seeking tutoring in courses ranging from the adult basic education level to advanced science courses. Tutoring alone is not always the solution to the problem. A student may very well have a negative self-perception of himself as a student and that compounded with his inability to comprehend course material may override a counselor's attempt to assist him in building greater confidence in his own abilities to learn.

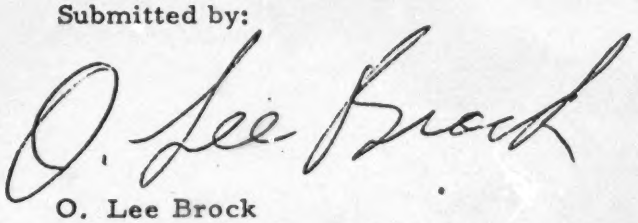
The utilization of junior and senior undergraduates who have mastered the first and second years of their programs will serve as a benefit to the students and the college. The use of peers in counseling has been long overdue, and to extend this concept into the staffing patterns of developmental centers will be more attractive to institutions who have large enrollments of economically disadvantaged students, as well as the federal work/study programs.

Within our urban centers we are going to experience increased activities in the area of cooperative education. This co-venture between the vocational elements of institutions and private industry not only gives the student invaluable on the job experience, it also gives the community at large an opportunity to become involved in the development of future trends in higher education. We have also discovered that students who participate in this unique co-venture in education, experience a lower drop-out rate. This suggests that relativity may be a major reason for high attrition rates in some programs.

In the immediate future we must get actively involved in teachers' union activities. There is a very subtle element that many overlook, in the purpose of the union. The issue of Affirmative Action versus seniority, is a direct conflict between the union's philosophy of employment policy and the government's committment to increased minority employment opportunities in higher education. At this time the union has lulled many minority professionals to sleep, with the slogan of too much administration. This is not the real issue, for education to exist you are going to have administrators and they are going to cost dollars. What we as responsible educators must do, is become internally involved and advocate for higher wages, fringe benefits, seniority and affirmative action. If we do not, it is very probable that the reconstruction era will haunt us again, one hundred years later. We will find ourselves legislated out of the open door, which is rapidly becoming the 'revolving door' for students and faculty who fall into the old clique of 'last hired first fired.'

Granted in the consortium we have witnessed positive changes, some MAD's have moved from their mid-management level positions to higher ranking posts, such as Dean of Administration, Dean of Students and others. We have seen our enrollment soar (from 4500 in 1970 to 15,000 in 1975), and minority faculty and staff ratios have improved but we cannot fool ourselves and believe that the job is done. In the remaining seventies and eighties developing trends in higher education are going to be crucial in the lives of third world people. Therefore it is a must that we get involved now! or our thoughts, needs, and wants will be decided by the majority. I thank you.

Submitted by:



O. Lee Brock
Chairperson, Puget Sound Regional
Minority Affairs Consortium
Assistant Director, Continuing Education
Director, Minority Affairs NSCC

Source: SBCCE MIS-1 Student enrollment report fall quarter, 1975

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